

Good morning. I'm Kevin Ward, Executive Administrator of the Texas Water Development Board. Welcome to Texas. It is a pleasure to be here this morning, and at this meeting to discuss a very important effort -- the establishment of a water-efficient product labeling program.

Our nation's recent droughts have raised public awareness about the importance of water, especially the importance of conserving water.

As the old English proverb goes -- "We never know the worth of water 'til the well runs dry."

As a representative of the agency responsible for planning for adequate water supplies in Texas, I whole-heartedly support this and other efforts that work to encourage our manufacturers, retailers, and service providers to support water efficient products, which will ultimately result in enhanced water conservation.

Through the State of Texas' water planning process, the Texas Water Development Board assesses and projects water availability, environmental impact, and water use for the agricultural, municipal and industrial sectors. A major component of meeting future demands in the state is through the implementation of water conservation programs and strategies.

The State of Texas' 2002 Water Plan projects that -- if the current water conservation practices in place are improved on an ongoing basis, municipal water demand statewide will decrease by an average of 22 gallons per capita per day, from 181 gallons per capita per day in 2000 to 159 gallons per capita per day in 2050. This 12 percent reduction in municipal demand, resulting in part from the installation of more efficient plumbing fixtures, is equivalent to 976,000 acre feet per year annually by 2050 or enough for almost 5.5 million Texans for a year.

When combined, the recommended new conservation water management strategies and the required existing conservation efforts are projected to result in savings of almost 2 million acre feet per year annually by 2050. Despite the savings identified through these conservation-based water management strategies, the potential for additional savings through increased water conservation remains.

The Texas Water Development Board is currently engaged in a legislatively formed Task Force that is reviewing and evaluating water conservation in Texas. Included in their tasks is the formation of water conservation best management practices that will be used as water management strategies in the water planning process. A program focusing on labeling of water efficient products would certainly support these best management practices.

We all know that today, water conservation efforts are more important than ever. Efficient water use can have major environmental, public health and economic benefits by helping to improve water quality, maintenance of ecosystems and protection of drinking water resources. This program would promote greater water efficiency by informing water users of the advantages of water-efficient products, motivating manufacturers to produce more water-efficient products, and encouraging distributors, retailers and local water utilities to promote these products.

Greater water efficiency also offers substantial financial benefit for publicly-funded water and wastewater infrastructure, as well as the consumers they serve. A nationally recognized label for water efficient products will complement and enhance the many local initiatives that now offer incentives and rebates for water conserving products to reduce the demand on their drinking water and wastewater treatment facilities.

As the leading water conservation agency in Texas, the Texas Water Development Board supports this program and your involvement as an individual, a water supplier, or other water interest group in this stakeholder process.

I would like to close with one of my favorite quotes from the Chairman of the Texas Water Development Board, Rod Pittman. *“Water in our state is so vital to our quality of life and to the future of economic development. We must protect what we now have through conservation and system improvements while at the same time plan for the future demands of our rapidly growing state.”*

I hope you have a productive meeting and a great time during your stay here in Texas.